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THEOSOPHY

VOL. 65, NO. 1 NOVEMBER, 1976

It is to infuse a new current of ideas and aspirations into modern thought, in short, to supply a logical basis for an elevated morality, a science and philosophy which is suited to the knowledge of the day, that Theosophy comes before the world.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

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THE THEOSOPHY COMPANY

OBJECTS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

I *To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or color;*

II *The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and*

III *The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.*

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THEOSOPHY

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

THE BROTHERHOOD OF HUMANITY

THE STUDY OF OCCULT SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

AND ARYAN LITERATURE

Vol. LXV 1976-1977

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That subtle self is to be known by thought alone; for every thought of men is interwoven with the senses, and when thought is purified, then the self arises.

—MUNDAKA UPANISHAD

THEOSOPHY

VOLUME 65 NOVEMBER, 1976 NUMBER 1

IN NO OTHER WAY

IN the third year of the nineteenth-century cycle of the Theosophical Movement (1878), H.P.B. put briefly in a letter the essential purposes she meant to be embodied in the Theosophical Society:

> It is the brotherhood of humanity, established to make away with all and every dogmatic religion founded on dead-letter interpretation, and to teach people and every member to believe but in one impersonal God; to rely upon his (man's) own powers; to consider himself his only saviour; to learn the infinitude of the occult psychological powers hidden within his own physical man; to develop these powers; and to give him the assurance of the immortality of his divine spirit and the survival of his soul; to make him regard every man of whatever race, color, or creed, and to prove to him that the only truths revealed to man by superior men (not a god) are contained in the Vedas of the ancient Aryas of India. Finally, to demonstrate to him that there never were, will be, nor are, any miracles, that there can be nothing "supernatural" in this universe, and that on earth, at least, the only god is man himself.

These, then, were the goals for which H.P.B. worked. These were the realizations toward which everything she wrote, said, and did were aimed. What progress, during the years of her activity in the world, she felt able to point to and claim, was in terms of movement toward these objectives. This means that an article such as "Our Three Objects" describes recognizable advances in the direction of these goals. It means that other articles, such as "The Cycle Moveth" and "The Tidal Wave," are studies of the gradual transformation of the mind of the race,

opening the way to these realizations, and a noting of some of the positive steps taken by writers and thinkers in the world.

The postulate of this great enterprise is the inherent and potential divinity of every human being. But in order to grasp the implications and possibilities thus suggested, it is necessary to consider the obstacles standing in the way—or, from another viewpoint, the stages of discovery (ultimately, self-discovery) which mark the path of human progress. Paradoxically, the eighteenth century was both an epoch of heroic revolution and a cycle of blinding materialism. While freeing themselves from the bonds of political servitude, the men of the eighteenth century were forging the shackles of mechanistic assumption for coming generations, supposing these bonds to be the very weapons of emancipation. The spirit of freedom was converted into the energy of intellectual self-defeat. The vigor of their attack on religious bigotry hid from the authors of the Enlightenment the spiritual originals behind the inverted dogmas of European belief. If this far-reaching mistake—having such bloody historical consequences—were to be corrected for the sake of future civilizations, it was essential that spiritual truth be separated, at least in principle, from the lies that had brought such extreme discredit to all religious ideas.

Accordingly, H.P.B. began her work by declaring the reality of the Wisdom-Religion, pointing to its origin in Perfected Men, and showing its periodic renewal throughout human history. As she wrote in "Is Theosophy a Religion?":

> It is from this WISDOM-RELIGION that all the various individual "Religions" (erroneously so-called) have sprung, forming in their turn offshoots and branches, and also all the minor creeds, based upon and always originated through some personal experience in psychology. Every such religion, or religious offshoot, be it considered orthodox or heretical, wise or foolish, started originally as a clear and unadulterated stream from the Mother-Source. The fact that each became in time polluted with purely human speculations and even inventions, due to interested motives, does not prevent any from having been pure in its early beginnings. There are those creeds—we shall not call them religions—which have now been overlaid with the human element out of all recognition; others just showing signs of early decay; not one that has escaped the hand of time. But each and all are of divine, because natural and true origin; aye—Mazdeism, Brahmanism, Buddhism as much as Christianity. It is

the dogmas and human element in the latter which led directly to modern Spiritualism.

One has only to inspect a few of the pages of European history to see why the angry men of the eighteenth century turned against all the claims of the religion they knew, deciding to base their faith on Galileo's and Newton's World-Machine. And while, in the nineteenth century, there would be those who—led by strong intuitions—recognized the truth in H.P.B.'s account of what had been lost by the misleading and declining faiths of the west, the great majority, swept along by conventional leaders, put their faith in the new-found powers of scientific discovery. This, indeed, became the popular religion of the modern world —most of all in America, where restraints were lacking.

In the present, after one more century of experience of this self-imposed darkness, the law of cycles brings fresh opportunity for self-discovery. At the mid-point of the twentieth century, after the horrors of two mass-murderous world wars and the genocidal crimes of concentration camps and death camps, it began to be evident that the materialistic credo could never give enduring support to any socio-moral structure, whether of science or government. The best thinkers began to make critical declarations along these lines. The obvious *contempt for man* implicit in the political systems devised during the twentieth century had put an end to the moral energies that often supported them at their beginnings, and no renewal from the thinking portion of the race was any longer possible. Brooding over the excesses of violence and oppression in our time, and the modes of their justification, Simone de Beauvoir wrote in 1948 on the manifest moral bankruptcy of conventional forms of social action:

> We are faced with the paradox that every action undertaken for man must immediately turn against man. This obvious and generally known truth is however so bitter that the first concern of a doctrine of action is ordinarily to mask this element of failure which every undertaking involves. The parties of oppression beg the problem: by denying the value of what they sacrifice, they make it appear that they are sacrificing nothing. Passing with ill faith from seriousness to nihilism, they simultaneously assert the unconditional value of their aim and the insignificance of the men they expect to use as instruments. Great as it may be, the number of victims can always be measured; and taken one by one, each is no more than an individual; however, through time and space, the triumph of the cause, on the other hand, transcends space and time; it embraces the in-

finite and interests the whole collectivity. To deny the outrage, it suffices to deny the importance of the individual where the collectivity is to be benefited: the collectivity is everything, the individual is nothing. . . .

But if such a contempt for man is convenient, it is also dangerous: a sense of abjectness can keep men in a state of resignation without hope, but it cannot incite them to struggle and the willing sacrifice of their life. . . . For it is too clear that if the individual is a pure zero, the sum of zeros that represents the collectivity is also a zero; no undertaking is important, no defeat is important, and likewise no victory. . . . if the individual is nothing, society cannot be anything either. If we divest it of substance, the State will have no substance; if the individual has nothing to sacrifice, there will be nothing to which it can sacrifice itself. . . . And the very grandeur of this failure discloses the truth: only the subject can justify its own existence; no alien subject, no object can bring it salvation from outside. It cannot be regarded as nothing, since consciousness of all things is in it.

Hence nihilist pessimism and rationalist optimism fail in their effort to destroy the bitter truth of the sacrifice: at the same time they destroy every reason for desiring it. Someone said to an ailing young woman who was crying because she had to leave her home, her occupations, all her past life: "Get well again. The rest is of no importance." "But nothing is important," she said, "so why should I get well?" She was right. For this world to have an importance, for our undertakings to have a meaning and merit sacrifices, we must affirm the concrete and singular density of this world, the singular reality of our projects and ourselves. . . . if the individual is affirmed as a singular and irreducible value, the word sacrifice regains its full meaning; what a man loses in renouncing his projects, his future, his life, no longer seems negligible. (*Art and Action,* Dorothy Norman, ed., 1948.)

Here, in the austere language of existentialist thought, we have the abstract rediscovery of the importance of the individual, of the conscious human subject in whom all potentiality resides. But it is one thing to reach this conclusion through rigorous speculative reasoning, and another to gain the full-bodied conviction that man, in his ultimate evolutionary possibility, is truly a god —the only god on earth. Yet the sort of realization set down so articulately by Simone de Beauvoir has its importance. It shows the general direction of the best thought of the time. It indicates the practical exhaustion of the appeal of political ideologies, at an intellectual level, at least, and a readiness to begin another kind of thinking.

But the *strength* that is needed for a new Renaissance, for another sort of Enlightenment, will require far more than abstract intellectual analysis. Conviction grows and action arises only from the foundation of inner certainties, and humans who have been reduced by their instructors to the metaphysical zeros of which Simone de Beauvoir speaks have need to start at the very beginning in thinking about themselves. In this there can be no substitute for Theosophy. The case is exactly as H.P.B. said in the article quoted above:

> Its doctrines, if seriously studied, call forth, by stimulating one's reasoning powers and awakening the *inner* in the animal man, every hitherto dormant power for good in us, and also the perception of the true and the real, as opposed to the false and the unreal. Tearing off with no uncertain hand the thick veil of dead-letter with which . . . old religious scriptures were cloaked, scientific Theosophy, learned in the cunning symbolism of the ages, reveals to the scoffer at old wisdom the origin of the world's faiths and sciences. It opens new vistas beyond the old horizons of crystallized, motionless and despotic faiths; and turning blind belief into a reasoned knowledge founded on mathematical laws—the only *exact* science—it demonstrates to him under profounder and more philosophical aspects the existence of that which, repelled by the grossness of its dead-letter form, he had long since abandoned as a nursery tale. It gives a clear and well-defined object, an ideal to live for, to every sincere man or woman belonging to whatever station in Society and of whatever culture and degree of intellect. Practical Theosophy is not *one* Science, but embraces every science in life, moral and physical. It may, in short, be justly regarded as the universal "coach," a tutor of world-wide knowledge and experience, and of an erudition which not only assists and guides his pupils toward a successful examination for every scientific or moral service in earthly life, but fits them for *the lives* to come, if those pupils will only study the universe and its mysteries *within themselves,* instead of studying them through the spectacles of orthodox science and religions.

What H.P.B. means here is spelled out at length in her *Key to Theosophy* and by Mr. Judge in his *Ocean* and the article, "Synthesis of Occult Science." The idea of the human individual, recognized as an abstract moral necessity by present-day intellectuals, acquires substance and rounded reality from the specific teachings of the sevenfold nature of man, the doctrine of reincarnation, and most of all from the philosophic conception of the Higher Self. The persuasive logic of these teachings invites the inquirer to further study. Through study, the complex bewilderments of

everyday life begin to be recognized as the natural effects of the interplay of schemes of causation originating in the far-distant past, continuing through life after life. The puzzles and contradictions of man's states of feeling, his occasional inspirations, the alternations of hope and discouragement—all the varieties of subjective experience—begin to fit into a pattern which has over-all meaning. From such realizations, however incomplete, confidence and stability in trial, courage in struggle, and determination in aspiration are slowly born. What are at first abstract metaphysical conceptions are little by little transformed into firm convictions, and this growth, although gradual, becomes the foundation for another kind of life. In this way Theosophy is indeed the universal "coach," as H.P.B. terms it, helping its pupils to a maturity that increases naturally with each step of further understanding. And while effort and persistence are required, it is also true, as Mr. Judge observed, that Theosophy affords "even the superficial and the weak or illogical thinker a perfect basis for ethics and an unerring guide in life." He further declared:

> The time must presently come when the really advanced thinkers of the age will be compelled to lay by their indifference, and their scorn and conceit, and follow the lines of philosophical investigation laid down in the *Secret Doctrine*. Very few seem yet to have realized how ample are these resources, because it involves a process of thought almost unknown to the present age of empiricism and induction. It is a revelation from archaic ages, indestructible and eternal, yet capable of being obscured and lost; capable of being again and again reborn, or like man himself—reincarnated.

The prospects in the present have changed considerably from those of the nineteenth-century scene. Orthodox science is no longer the supreme authority, as a result of harsh criticisms from both within and without. Psychology has lost control in many of its branches, becoming as extravagant as any exotic cult in the outposts of popular self-help and "growth" centers. At the same time leading physicists are questioning the very foundations of the scientific epistemology. The ranges of experiment in fields such as micro-biology are seen by informed critics as intruding and dangerous manipulations of the human biological heritage, and an underlying distrust of science in general haunts many who feel that the researchers have been too willing collaborators with both nature-ravaging industrial technology and genocidal military undertakings. In religion, except for the Fundamentalist sects,

orthodoxy hardly exists. Within the long-established "respectable" churches, an atmosphere of "free thought" has prevailed for a generation, and there is crumbling of historic attitudes and beliefs even among the Catholics and their priests. New sects are multiplying in profusion, and while a frothy superficiality seems the chief characteristic of many of these developments, it is plain enough that underneath them all there is undeniable spiritual longing. Yet little if any sense is discernible in these ever-shifting currents of change. Scores of "leaders" have come from other parts of the world—from Japan, India, and Tibet, and sometimes from Europe and South America—and there has been a curious mingling of Eastern teachings with hedonistic doctrines evolved in the United States—a far cry, indeed, from the austere conceptions of the high religions of the past. The most that can be said, perhaps, of the present popular level of belief is that the bars of conventional restriction have all come down. But since there are no strong positive convictions to take their place, and little serious philosophy, the entire area of religious inquiry begins to assume the aspect of a psychic morass.

Yet the extravagance as well as the amorphous character of present-day belief may be seen in another light. A further incarnation of Manas would, one may say, be impossible without the breakdown of confining assumption, and the very age, it might be assumed, has reached an "ugly duckling" stage which must be gone through before the stronger qualities of the cycle can make themselves felt. Certain it is, at any rate, that at the mass level the collective *psyche* of the race is now in extremely plastic condition, manifesting in its new-found freedom the characteristics of a peculiarly unmanageable adolescence, including rampant impulsiveness and the familiar tendency to self-indulgence along with much susceptibility to suggestion.

What is wanted, then, is a source of deep and stabilizing convictions, a basis for believing that human beings actually have within themselves the *capacity* to know for themselves—that man's inward powers are equal to the task. This is the teaching on which H.P.B. laid the greatest emphasis, embodying it in the metaphysics of self-reliance and moral responsibility. It hardly needs pointing out that in order for people to rely upon themselves instead of some outside force or authority, they need a conception of self that holds high resources. How is a true con-

ception of self acquired?

Study is the answer given by Theosophy. Study is the avenue of approach to knowledge which opens the way to all else. Learn well the Theosophical doctrines, H.P.B. counseled, in order to awaken the true man within the animal man, and so stir to activity "every hitherto dormant power for good in us." From study one soon sees the crucial bearing of the doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation on the objective of awakening self-knowledge. These teachings open up, first of all, long vistas of egoic history. We are not creatures of a day, but have a heritage—an individual heritage—which reaches back for thousands and millions of years. Human evolution acquires the majesty of great cycles of time from these teachings. The conception of a spiritual ancestry is a natural corollary. Not an outside god, but a race of gods—the Manasa-putras—are our forefathers. From the idea of a great past, involving thousands of incarnations in ancient races, we obtain a feeling for the mysteries and vicissitudes of history, and a deepening conception of social responsibility having complex relationships with other groups of humankind. Brotherhood is no passing impulse but the law of our common development. "Brothers" is not something that we ought to become but what we *are,* in the very roots of our being. The subtleties of the middle principles of man's invisible nature begin to throw light on our states of feeling, while explaining, also, the puzzling contradictions of so-called "Spiritual" phenomena.

From the beginning, students of Theosophy have had this work to do—*to be students*—to saturate their minds with philosophical teachings and ideas on which the hope of the human race depends. For when the mind is filled with true conceptions, the meaning of day-to-day experience begins to be seen in another light, the light of soul-knowledge. From such knowledge, slowly gaining experiential confirmation, comes independent discovery that Theosophy is indeed true, that it works, and brings to those for whom it works a better and far more useful life. This is the knowledge needed by all the world, but which will be spread around the world only by the efforts of those who constitute themselves Companions in this work. A "brotherhood of humanity" will be established in no other way.

THE MYSTERY OF INDIVIDUALITY

I: THE "IMPRISONED" MONAD

It is indivisible yet appeareth as divisible among creatures.
—*Bhagavad-Gita*

THEOSOPHICAL students often experience feelings akin to despair and frustration whenever earnestly attempting to understand the teachings of Theosophy on the subject of evolution, human and cosmic. One problem is no sooner "solved" than the hydra head of several new, more alarming ones takes its place.

The chief difficulty probably lies in the endeavor to grasp with the brain-mind a drama which can never be satisfactorily comprehended until all one's powers, mental, psychic, and spiritual, are in full flower. No more than a child can adequately appreciate the state called "adulthood," can the average man possessed of but the germ of self-consciousness fathom what is self-evident to a sage. However, for one to admit to a certain degree of uncertainty on these subjects seems highly commendable, especially when the admission is followed by further search. Those only err who, preferring mental quietude to indecision, cease to dwell on the problem, or become content with dogmas. H. P. Blavatsky remarks that "the purely and transcendentally spiritual conceptions are adapted only to the perceptions of those who 'see without eyes, hear without ears, and sense without organs' . . ." (*S.D.* II, 81.)

> The student must not expect to find . . . an account of all the stages and transformations which intervene between the first beginnings of "Universal" evolution and our present state. To give such an account would be as impossible as it would be incomprehensible to men who cannot even grasp the nature of the plane of existence next to that to which, for the moment, their consciousness is limited. (*S.D.* I, 20.)

Another stumbling block to understanding, growing out of the first, is the tendency to fasten literal interpretations to statements and to examine them independent of the universal background of the extended Theosophical message. An illustration is easily provided. The author of *The Secret Doctrine* speaks of her diffi-

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NOTE.—This is the first article of a series reprinted from THEOSOPHY vol. 42.

culty in describing the "stages" through which the Monad passes:

> Metaphysically speaking, it is of course an absurdity to talk of the "development" of a Monad, or to say that *it* becomes "Man." But any attempt to preserve metaphysical accuracy of language in the use of such a tongue as the English would necessitate at least three extra volumes of this work, and would entail an amount of verbal repetition which would be wearisome in the extreme. (*S.D.* I, 174fn.)

This is a familiar statement, perhaps, but how many, having read it, will nevertheless exclaim after studying the peregrinations of the Monad through the lower kingdoms: "Oh! So we *do* come up from the minerals and vegetables after all." The thought of a Monad crawling up from a mineral to a plant, an insect, a mammal, is difficult to eradicate from the student mind, owing perhaps to certain mental fixations derived from materialistic teachings on evolution.

Before passing to other problems—all of them, in truth, revolving around the mystery of individuality—it may be of assistance to gather a number of propositions from *The Secret Doctrine,* all tending to suggest that the Monad never was, never will be, and never can be fully "imprisoned" in the lower kingdoms, while at the same time the Monad, as consciousness and intelligence, is the hidden, impelling power behind all evolution, inasmuch as it is impossible for matter to exist in differentiated form independent of this ensouling essence. Only that which is immortal and unmodifiable can be the vivifying agent behind the endless modifications in great nature. William Q. Judge calls especial attention to the statement from *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 171) that "as the evolution of the Globes and that of the Monads are so closely interblended, we will make of the two teachings one." He adds:

> This is laid down with extreme clearness and should not be forgotten. It is not expanded so that inattentive minds may get it through much repetition, but it is postulated once for all. It is still altogether too customary for students to separate the Monads, first from the globes and then from the beings thereon. They cannot be so divided off. All the globes and their objects are and ever will be monads in evolution. . . . The false notion should be discarded that there was a time when there were no monads on the globe. . . . The globe is the creation of the monad . . ." (THEOSOPHY 2: 157.)

We must remember, too, that the physical side of life is not

the underprivileged portion, for in its higher essence it is as divine and omniscient as any other part. In this connecton one can refer to *The Secret Doctrine* for discussion of the three lines of evolution, the spiritual or monadic, the intellectual, and the physical, which "are inextricably interwoven and interblended *at every point*":

> The Monad or Jiva *per se* cannot be even called spirit: it is a ray, a breath of the ABSOLUTE, or the Absoluteness rather, and the Absolute Homogeneity, having no relations with the conditioned and relative finiteness, is unconscious on our plane . . . (*S.D.* I, 247.)
>
> It stands to reason that a MONAD cannot either progress or develop, or even be affected by the changes of states it passes through. *It is not of this world or plane,* and may be compared only to an indestructible star of divine light and fire, thrown down to our Earth as a plank of salvation for the personalities in which it indwells. It is for the latter to cling to it; and thus partaking of its divine nature, obtain immortality. Left to itself the Monad will cling to no one; but, like the "plank," be drifted away to another incarnation by the unresting current of evolution. (*S.D.* I, 174fn.)
>
> Owing to its identity with the ALL-FORCE, which . . . is inherent in the Monad, it is all-potent on the *Arupa,* or formless plane. On our plane, its essence being too pure, it remains all-potential, but individually becomes inactive. . . . (*S.D.* II, 110.)

With respect to the monadic consciousness within the mindless man; prior to the lighting of mind, H.P.B. implies that the Monad has not even in that high form of animal intelligence found a direct channel for expression.

> Their physical bodies belonging to the Earth, their Monads remained on a higher plane altogether. (*S.D.* II, 199.)
>
> The spiritual Monad . . . could never dwell in such a form otherwise than in an *absolutely latent state.* (*S.D.* II, 79.)
>
> The "Lunar Monads" cannot progress, for they have not yet had sufficient touch with the forms created by "Nature" to allow of their accumulating experiences through its means. It is the Manasa-Dhyanis who fill up the gap, and they represent the evolutionary power of Intelligence and Mind, the link between "Spirit" and "Matter"—in this Round. (*S.D.* I, 181.)

H.P.B. was once asked: "Can there be Consciousness without Mind?" "Not on this plane of matter," was the reply. If the Monad is another name for Consciousness, or Atma-Buddhi, we can make our own deductions. In *The Secret Doctrine* she wrote:

> The *Monad* is impersonal and a god *per se,* albeit unconscious

> on this plane. For, divorced from its third . . . principle, Manas, which is the horizontal line of the first manifested triangle or trinity, it can have no consciousness or perception of things on this earthly plane. "The highest sees through the eyes of the lowest" in the manifested world; *Purusha* (Spirit) remains blind without the help of Prakriti (matter) in the material spheres; and so does Atma-Buddhi without Manas. (*S.D.* II, 123fn.)

All Monads, then, are apparently in one of two stages. They are either Atma-Buddhi or Atma-Buddhi-Manas. They can never be anything less. If Manas alone of the higher triad is to some degree incarnated in our race, and Atma-Buddhi is available to us solely through Manas, how can it ever be imagined that the Monad can reach *below* the plane of mind? To use an expression, we can say (with many qualifications), that the Monad "descends" gradually into matter. When farthest "removed," therefore, we call it a mineral Monad. It is imprisoned only in the sense that it is unable to find a direct channel of expression in that kingdom. When it becomes more manifest we speak of the Monad in the vegetable stage of development, then in the animal, and eventually in the kingdom of mindless man. But it never *contacts* matter until it is Atma-Buddhi-Manas, a human Monad, and even here we do not have a direct contact save through the manasic principle as agent. The Monad is the Perceiver, is vision itself, pure and simple, and it looks directly on *ideas*.

> As the Logos reflects the Universe in the Divine Mind, and the manifested Universe reflects itself in each of its Monads . . . so the MONAD has, during the cycle of its incarnations, to reflect in itself every *root-form* of each Kingdom. (*S.D.* II, 186.)

So the Monad only *reflects* the root types of each kingdom. It does not "become" the kingdoms, any more than a man going on a journey and observing all he views, becomes what he sees. Can we not appreciate, then, that it makes no difference to the Monad in what state it appears to be: mineral, vegetable, or animal, since all states are in one sense the same—locations for transition.

THE VISION OF SCIPIO

A VERSION OF CICERO'S "SOMNIUM SCIPIONIS"

THE short fragment of Cicero generally known as the Vision of Scipio to those who are seeking for the scattered pearls, which once adorned the sacred bosom of the pure virgin of the mysteries, before she was defiled and her robe and jewels trampled in the mire of the sty, is perhaps the most interesting record in the voluminous writings of the great Roman orator.

Whence Tully derived his information, whether from the writings of the outer schools of Pythagorean and Platonic philosophy, or from private sources, is in the present case immaterial.

Antiquity has appealed to a higher tribunal in these later days for justification, and, as a witness in this all important case, we welcome the noble Scipio, and bid him come into the fair and open court of LUCIFER, there to plead his cause in words so eloquent, wise and clear, that the jury, LUCIFER'S good readers, will require no further comment.[1]

For those who like dates and facts, and the anatomical processes of modern chronicle-ism, with its dry-boned rattle, it may be stated that the occasion of the vision was as follows.

At the outbreak of the third Punic War 149 B.C., P. Corn. Scipio Æmilianus Africanus Minor, the philosopher and polished man of letters, accompanied the Roman army to Africa, and there met with the aged Massinissa, prince of Numidia, the friend of his great-grandfather by adoption, the renowned Africanus (Major). After spending the day in discussing the political institutions of their respective countries and in recollections by the aged prince of the elder Africanus, for whom he still retained the most lively affection, Scipio, wearied by the lengthy conversation and exhausted by his journey, retired to his couch and soon fell into a profound sleep. And while he slept the vision of his grandsire appeared to him, in that form which was more familiar to Scipio from his statue than from his own person, and after foretelling

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NOTE.—This article was first printed in *Lucifer* for July, 1889 and reprinted in THEOSOPHY, 2:314. The signature, E.E.O., is Madame Blavatsky.

[1] The most remarkable passages are printed in Italics.

the future exploits of his adopted grandson and the incidents of his death in full detail, continued (Scipio narrating the story):

"But that you may be the readier to protect your country, know this of a surety. All who have preserved, helped or increased their country, have in heaven a certain and assigned place, there in blessedness to enjoy a sempiternal age. For to the Supreme Deity, which rules the whole of this universe, nothing on earth is more acceptable than the assemblies and gatherings of men united by law, which are called States. It is from this region that the rulers and preservers of States proceed and hither do they return."

Hereupon, although excessively frightened, I asked whether my father Paulus too and others, whom we thought annihilated, still lived.[2]

"To be sure they do," answered Africanus, "for they have flown from the chains of their bodies, as out of a prison. That which you call life is death. But behold your father Paulus approaching you."

And when I saw my father, I burst into a great flood of tears. But he, folding me to his breast, with kisses, forbade me to weep. And as soon as I had dried my tears and began to be able to speak, I said: "Prythee, most reverend and excellent father, since this is a state of life, as I hear from Africanus why do I tarry on earth and not hasten to join you in this state?"[3]

"It may not be," he replied, "for unless that Deity, whose temple is the whole of this, which you behold, shall free you from those ties which keep you in the body; the way hither cannot be open to you. For this is the law which governs the birth of men; that they should maintain that globe, which you see is the middle one in this temple, and which is called the earth. And a soul has been given them from those sempiternal fires, which you call constellations and stars. These being of a globular and round nature and ensouled with divine minds, perform their cycles and orbits with wonderful rapidity. Wherefore, both you, Publius, and all good men should keep their soul in the guardianship of the body, and should not quit the life of mortals without the command of that Being, by whom the soul was given to you, lest you should seem to have been untrue to that duty to mankind, which has been

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[2] *Extinctos*, a strong word in contradistinction to *viveret* expressing the continuance of life.

[3] *Hac*.

assigned you by the Deity. Practice, therefore, justice and the spirit of duty,[4] like as both your grandsire here and I, your father, have done. Now duty, excellent though it is when shown to parents and relations, is best of all, when practised towards one's country.[5] Such a mode of life is the path to Heaven and to this assembly of men, who have lived, but now freed from their body inhabit the place, which you see."

Now that place was a circle shining with dazzling splendour amid the stars,[6] which you, after the Greeks, call the Milky Way, and from it all other objects seemed to me, as I gazed, exceedingly bright and marvellous. There were stars which we have never seen from earth; and the magnitudes of all of them were such as we have never suspected. The smallest of them was the star, which being furthest from Heaven and nearest to earth, shone with a borrowed light.[7] Moreover, the stellar globes far exceeded the earth in magnitude, which now to me appeared so small, that I was grieved to see our empire contracted, as it were, into a very point.[8]

Now as I continued to gaze thereon with increasing interest, Africanus continued:

"How long will your attention be fixed earthwards? Do you not perceive into what precincts[9] you are come?

"All things are bound together with nine spheres or globes. The last of these is celestial, and embraces all the others, being that supreme Deity which restrains and contains the rest. In this sphere are fixed the sempiternal cyclic revolutions of the stars,[10] and to it

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4 *Pietas.*

5 The Roman mind saw no higher duty than this. It was necessarily the *summum bonum* of a race even in its best days of warriors and statesmen.

6 *Inter flammas,* flaming bodies.

7 Heaven (cœlum) here means the *Lactæus Orbis,* the Milky Way.

8 The above lines, as well as the still more extraordinary passage in the sequel, written some fifty years B.C., are such a stumbling block to the critics, that the wildest hypotheses have been put forward with all the parade of learning. Among others the following is interesting. "If we compare this passage with the fortieth chapter of the Prophecies of Isaiah, and with other parts of the same prophecy we shall find it difficult to believe that that inspired book had not in part, or wholly, come to the knowledge of the Romans as early as the age of Cicero." The passage of Isaiah referred to is as follows (v. 22):—"It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers." The other passages referred to have not as yet been discovered by the translator. *Verbum sapienti satis.*

9 *Templum,* signifies a portion of the heavens cut off from the rest, and was the technical term for the "Houses of the Heavens" in augury.

10 *Illi, qui volvuntur, stellarum cursus sempiterni,* a somewhat involved passage; the translation, "the original principles of those endless revolutions which the planets perform," is not warranted by the Latin.

are subjected the seven spheres, which revolve backwards with a contrary motion to the celestial sphere.[11] Of these the star they call on earth Saturnian, possesses one sphere. Next comes that splendour, which is said to be of Jupiter, propitious and salutary to the human race. Then a sphere of a red colour and terrible to the earth, which you say is of Mars. Next in order and almost under the mid region the Sun holds place, the leader and chief and director of the remaining lights, the mind of the world and its controlling principle, of such magnitude that it illumines and fills all things with its light. The two orbits of Venus and Mercury follow the Sun, as attendants. In the lowest sphere the Moon revolves, lit by the rays of the Sun. Below this there is nothing, which is not subject to death and decay, except the souls bestowed on the race of men by the gift of the gods. Above the moon, however, all things are eternal. For the Earth, which is the middle and ninth sphere, both does not move and is lowest, and all ponderable bodies are carried towards it by their natural gravity."[12]

And when I recovered myself from my amazed contemplation of these things, "What," I asked, "is this mighty and sweet harmony which fills my ears?"

And he replied: "This melody composed of unequal intervals, yet proportionately harmonized, is produced by the impulse and motion of the spheres themselves, which by blending high and low tones produces uniformly divers symphonies. Such mighty motions cannot be made in silence, and nature brings it to pass that the extremes should at one end give forth a low note, at the other a high tone. Consequently that highest star-bearing orbit of heaven which I have mentioned, whose revolution is more rapid, moves with a sharp and vigorous sound: whereas this sphere of the Moon, which is the lowest, gives forth a very grave tone. While the Earth, the ninth, remaining immovable always abides in the

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[11] See *Plato, Timæs, XII.* ". . . besides which he made one of the circles external, the other internal. The motion of the exterior circle he proclaimed to be that of sameness, and that of the interior the motion of difference."

[12] If from these nine spheres we subtract the ultimate celestial, and the Earth, which is perishable, we shall, as in the Eastern system, get a septenary, for the so-called first and seventh principles are really no principles. It must be left to the intuition of the student, to decide whether this echo of ancient science, this fugitive ray from the lamp of the Mysteries, is to be applied literally to the seven physical bodies called planets in ancient astronomy, or is meant as a hint for those who have ears to hear. "For the Mercury of the Philosophers is not the common mercury." In occult science the seven physical "planets" of astrology are merely symbols of the seven principles of all material bodies.—See *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I., 152.

lowest seat, *encompassing* the middle place of the universe."[13]

"These eight orbits,[14] two of which have the same power, namely Mercury and Venus, create a scale of seven distinct intervals; *a number which is the connecting principle*[15] *of nearly all things*. And learned men imitating this mystery with strings and vocal harmonies, have won for themselves a return to this place: like as some others, who, *endowed with extraordinary natural powers, have studied divine sciences even in earth-life*.[16]

"Now mortals have become deaf to these sounds, by having their ears continually filled with them; so much so that hearing is the dullest of your senses, just as the people who dwell near the Cataracts of the Nile are defective in their sense of hearing. And so this sound, which is generated by the exceedingly rapid revolution of the whole Cosmos,[17] is so stupendous, that mortal ears cannot contain it: just as you cannot look at the face of the sun without both sight and sense being overcome by its rays."

Now, though I was struck with astonishment at these things, I still kept my eyes turned to the earth. Whereupon Africanus said:—"I perceive, Scipio, that you still gaze upon the seat and home of mortals. But, if it appears to you so small as it really is, it were better to keep your eyes ever fixed on these celestial sights, and disregard those of earth. For what renown from the mouths of men, or glory worth striving for, can you achieve? You see that the population of the earth is confined to scattered and narrow localities, and that vast uninhabited tracts surround the inhabited specks: that the dwellers on earth also are so cut off from one another, that mutual intercourse is impossible: but that *some stand sideways, some backwards, some directly opposite you,*[18]

13 *Complexa medium mundi locum;* this is generally translated, "occupying the central spot in the universe," a somewhat strange and unnatural rendering of *complexa,* which is never found bearing this meaning in any other context. By giving it, however, its natural signification of "embracing," a key to the tone meaning of the term, sphere, is offered. Readers who are interested in mystic harmonies, the music of the spheres, and their occult correspondences, should carefully study the opening chapters of the *Timæus* of Plato; this, however, will prove a somewhat desperate undertaking, if the translations of the schoolmen have to be solely relied on.

14 The celestial sphere is not included, seeing that the various tones are produced by the varying velocity of the different spheres revolving in an opposite direction to the heavenly sphere.

15 *Nodus.*

16 *Qui præstantibus ingeniis in vitæ humana divina studia coluerunt.*

17 *Totius mundi,* an additional proof that the physical planets are not meant in the preceding description.

18 *Sed partim obliquas, partim aversos, partim etiam adversos stare vobis.* A somewhat difficult passage to do justice to; the next paragraph, however, proves beyond all doubt that the positions are referred to a spherical and not a plane surface.

from whom you can certainly hope for no glory. You perceive, moreover, that the earth is also encompassed and surrounded, so to speak, with belts: *two of which separated by the greatest distance and situated at each end under the very poles of the heaven,*[19] you see are rigid with ice; but the middle zone, which is also the largest, is burnt up with the heat of the sun. Two of these are habitable: the southern zone, the inhabitants of which *have their feet turned towards you,*[20] has no connection with your race. Of the northern (temperate) zone, however, which you inhabit, see what a small share you possess. The whole surface inhabited by you, of small extent north and south, but of greater length east and west, is an insignificant strip,[21] surrounded by the sea, which you call on earth the Atlantic, the Great Sea, or Ocean. And yet you see how small it is in spite of its great name. How, then, is it possible for either your own name, or that of any of our countrymen, to pass out of these familiar and well-known countries and either traverse the Caucasus here, which you see, or cross yonder Ganges? Who in the rest of the world, east or west, or in the extreme northern or southern regions, will hear your name? And if you subtract these, you will easily see, within what narrow limits your glory seeks to spread itself.

"How long, again, will those who speak about you, continue to do so? For even if future generations should successively desire to hand down the praises of any one of us, which they may have, in their turn, received from their fathers, yet, because of *the cataclysms of water and fire,*[22] *which must happen at fixed periods,* we can attain not even lasting renown, much less eternal glory. For what does it profit you to be spoken of by men who shall be born hereafter, when those are silent, who were born before you, not less, indeed, in number, and certainly better men; when, moreover, no one even of those, who can bear our repute, is able

[19] **If Cicero believed the earth was a flat surface, how could he possibly speak of *two* poles?**

[20] *Quorum australis ille, in quo qui insistunt, adversa vobis urgent vestigia, nihil ad vestrum genus.* Surely no words could testify more clearly to the science of the ancients! Even a child might conclude the argument with a triumphant Q.E.D., and yet hear the commentator of the orthodox schools:—"This is a very curious passage, and if our author's interpreters are to be believed, he was acquainted with the true figure of the earth, a discovery which is generally thought to have been reserved for Sir Isaac Newton (?!), and to have been confirmed by some late experiments; but I own I am not without some doubts as to our author's meaning, whether he does not here speak, not of the whole face of the earth, but of that part of it which was possessed or conquered by the Romans."—GUTHRIE. *Requiescat in pace!*

[21] ***Infula,*** **literally a fillet or ribbon used as an ornament in the sacrifices.**

[22] ***Propter eluriones, exustiones que terrarum.***

to preserve the recollections of a single year. Now men usually measure the year by the sun, that is, by the revolution of one star; but it is only when *the rest of the constellations*[23] *have returned to their original positions,* and have brought back the same aspect of the heaven after long intervals, that the true revolution of the year can be spoken of. In which cycle I scarcely dare say how many centuries of mortals are contained. For like as in olden days, when the soul of Romulus entered into these mansions, men saw the sun obscured and extinguished, so when the sun shall be again obscured in the same position and period, and all the signs and stars are recalled to the same origin, then must you consider the cycle complete. But you must know that not even the twentieth part of this year has completed its revolution.[24]

"Wherefore, if you have hopes of a return to this place, where great and excellent men enjoy all things; of what value, I ask, is that human glory, which can scarcely extend to the small fraction of one cycle? And so if you would look on high and fix your gaze on this state and your eternal home; you will neither devote your life to vulgar fame, nor centre the hope of your welfare in human rewards. True worth itself by its own attractions should lead you to real achievement. What others say of you, let them see to it; for talk they will. But all such fame is bounded by the narrow limits of the regions which you see. Never yet has a man enjoyed lasting fame, for death destroys and the oblivion of posterity engulphs it.[25]

"And, if indeed, O, Africanus," I said, "a *side path*[26] to the highway to heaven lies open to men, who have deserved well of their country; and though heretofore from my youth up, by treading in the footsteps of yourself and my father, I have never been untrue to your honourable reputation; yet now with such a prospect

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23 *Astra;* the term *astrum* is never applied to the planets; it generally means a constellation or a sign of the zodiac, and is used in the plural as a designation of the heavens. The usual rendering, however, is "planets"; clearly a perversion of the radical meaning.

24 This astronomical cycle was called by the Romans *Annus Magnus* or *Annus Mundanus.* It is a period of some 25,000 common years, and the key to the mysteries of the Manvantaric cycles, rounds, races, and sub-races. The method of calculation of such cycles being one of the most important branches of occult astronomy, was jealously guarded. Even in the present Renaissance, figures are kept back.

25 Throughout this remarkable exposition of the emptiness of fame the grand precept "kill out ambitions" re-echoes, emphasized, however with all the logic of the practical Roman mind, so that it may stand for trial in the open court of Reason, and fight the doubter with physical facts.

26 A hint that even true patriotism is not the *Path,* though tending in its direction.

before me, I will strive with even greater watchfulness."

"Strive on," said he, "with the assurance that *it is not you, who are subject to death but your body*. For that which is really yourself, is not the being which your bodily shape declares. But the real man is the *thinking principle*[27] of each, and not the form, which can be pointed to with the finger. Of this, then, be sure that *thou art a God;* in as much as deity is that which has will, sensation, memory, foresight, and rules, regulates and moves the body it has in charge, just as the Supreme Deity does the universe. And like as eternal deity guides the Cosmos which is in a certain degree subject to decay,[28] so a sempiternal soul moves the destructible body. *Now that which is ever in motion is eternal.* Whereas that which communicates motion to something else, and which is set in motion by an external cause, must necessarily cease to exist, when its motion is exhausted.

"That, therefore, which has the principle of motion in itself, seeing that it can never fail itself, is the only eternal existence, and moreover is the source and causative principle of motion to all other bodies endowed with movement. The causative principle however, can have no antecedent cause. For all things spring from this principle, which cannot in the nature of things be generated from anything else; for if it were so, it would cease to be the principal cause. And if this is without beginning, it can evidently have no end, for if the principle of causation were destroyed, it could not be reborn from anything else, nor give birth to any thing out of itself, for all things must necessarily be generated from the causative principle. The principle of motion, therefore, comes from that which is endowed with self-movement; and this can suffer neither birth nor death; otherwise every heaven would collapse, and every nature necessarily come to a standstill, seeing that it could no longer obtain that force by which it was originally impelled.

"Since, therefore, it is evident that that only is eternal which is self-motive[29] who is there to deny that this is a rational attribute of souls? For everything which is set in motion by external impulse is destitute of the soul principle,[30] whereas everything en-

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27 *Mens* (Manas).

28 Cosmic pralaya.

29 This is why the Absolute and the unknown deific Principle, is called "Absolute Motion" in the *Secret Doctrine*—a "motion," which has certainly nothing to do with, nor can it be explained by, that which is called motion on Earth. [ED.]

30 *Inanimum.*

souled[31] is energised by an interior and self-created motion; for this is the soul's proper nature and power. And if it alone of all things has the attribute of self-movement; it surely is not subject to birth but is eternal. Exercise the soul therefore, in the highest pursuits. Now the noblest interest of a man is the welfare of his country; and if the soul is practised and exercised in such cares, it will the more speedily wing its flight to these mansions and its proper home. *And the time of this achievement will be greatly shortened, if even now in the prison of the body, it extends beyond, and by contemplating things which are not of the body, withdraws itself as much as possible from its earthly tabernacle.*

"For the souls of those who have given themselves up to the pleasures of the body, and have made themselves the servants of these pleasures, and under the sway of the passions, whose ruler is pleasure, have transgressed the laws of gods and men; *on quitting the body, they hover round the earth, and do not return to this heavenly haven until they have been tossed about for many ages.*"[32]

He vanished and I awoke from sleep.

E.E.O., F.T.S.

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31 *Animal.*
32 *i.e.*, are reincarnated.

The Cure for Sorrow

The Society is always free and open. It has no dogmas. The doctrines we have put principally forward among a great many others for investigation cover everything; we are so presumptuous as to say that Theosophy is large enough to cover all Science and all Religion, to make indeed Science religious, and Religion scientific —but among all these doctrines we think there is a truth of the highest importance to humanity, because sorrow prevails everywhere, and we are attempting by our Society's work to find a cure for sorrow.

—William Q. Judge

letters · questions · comment

It is not hard to see the practical importance of prophetic dreams, but what does the Theosophical philosophy have to say about the psychological value of dreaming in general?

It is well-known that dreaming is something that everyone does, although there are those who may not remember dreaming. Dreams are persuasive evidence that consciousness is not limited to the present waking state. In dreams we perceive as if through the senses, yet the physical senses are dormant; we experience, too, the whole range of feeling known in waking life, and sometimes, in addition, the sensation of flying, yet without the aid of the physical body. These experiences cannot be wholly the product of the physical brain, as contemporary thinkers now suspect. In *Where the Wasteland Ends,* Theodore Roszak finds in dreaming evidence that even the ordinary man has resources of which he is largely unaware, but might draw into waking life if he would recognize their real value. He reminds the reader:

> Last night, as on all the nights of your life, you dreamed much and magnificently, moving in an alternative reality of your own invention whose imaginative magnitude (for all you know) may have rivaled the creations of Homer and Shakespeare. Yet there are many people who would insist that their nights were wholly dreamless, if there did not exist behavioral evidence —electronically calibrated and recorded—to show them otherwise. Strange, is it not, that even in such matters, we should need to invoke the authority of experts . . . as if our very dreams were not our own?

Mr. Roszak goes on to say that we have been conditioned to turn away from these experiences with distrust, regarding them as curiosities, a regrettable waste of time, or simply as mere physiological epiphenomena. But dreams, he argues, are of far greater import to our waking mental life:

> If I were to suggest that in your dreams miracles of self-discovery have taken place, that in the ocean bottoms of sleep you have found your way to sacred ground . . . if I were to submit that this had happened to you—to *you,* last night—you would be incapable of verifying or refuting the suggestion. That is what it means to be at the boundaries of consciousness—or

> rather of *orthodox* consciousness. Here, in part, is what our alienated normality requires of you, this scornful neglect of the dark mind which leaves you a stranger to so much of your own experience, and which, even now, may be counseling you to pay these trivial matters no attention . . . these senseless dreams . . . this vacuum of existence called sleep.

According to Theosophical teachings, the sleep states, of which dreaming is only one, provide us with an easily accessible analogue to the long-range processes of our evolution as self-conscious beings. The journey from waking to dreaming to deep sleep and back to waking is said to parallel the transitions from terrestrial life through the states after death and back to life again. Reflection on this possibility helps to place the inner man in the position of an observer of whatever state he may, at any time, be in, and encourages awareness that "he" is, in reality, none of these states but the consciousness that moves through them all.

In his article, "The Three Planes of Human Life," William Q. Judge writes that in these states we have the means of attaining, "as by the spider's small thread . . . the free space of spiritual life." He also says:

> Now the ordinary non-concentrated man, by reason of the want of focus due to multitudinous and confused thought, has put his Swapna [dreaming] field or state into confusion, and in passing through it the useful and elevating experiences of Sushupti [dreamless sleep] become mixed up and distorted, not resulting in the benefit to him as a waking person which is his right as well as his duty to have. Here again is seen the lasting effect, either prejudicial or the opposite, of the conduct and thoughts when awake.
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> So it appears, then, that what he should try to accomplish is such a clearing up and vivification of Swapna state as shall result in removing the confusion and distortion existing there, in order that upon emerging into waking life he may retain a wider and brighter memory of what occurred in Sushupti. This is done by an increase of concentration upon high thoughts, upon noble purposes, upon all that is best and most spiritual in him while awake.

This shows that "we" are not the conditions, mental or physical, that prevail during the cycle of daily life and which occupy our time and thought; but that, as beings of far greater potentiality than we suppose, we may draw upon knowledge accessible to us in other states, and so make of conditions here a life which gives full expression to the soul, even while in a body.

on the lookout

Cyclic "Undercurrents"

Writing in 1890 ("The Cycle Moveth," *Lucifer,* March), H.P.B. spoke in retrospect of the "undercurrent" which appeared in America about the middle of the last century, and eventually grew to challenge the materialism of the age. This was the cycle of psychic or "Spiritualistic" phenomena, which had the effect of provoking insistent questions and wondering—raising issues which, in subsequent years, the Theosophical Movement was launched to illuminate and explain. Another sort of "undercurrent" is now becoming evident in this century, of which Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* was an early expression and example. While the immediate effect in the nineteenth century of the wave of psychism was to arouse interest in phenomenalistic "wonders" that Spiritualism showed to be possible, in this century there is an underlying ethical theme in the rapidly progressing discoveries concerning man's relations with his natural environment. A deep pantheistic note is often evident in the work of those who express the viewpoint of the new science of ecology, and more than a few writers have insisted that practical changes must be accompanied and maintained by religious and ethical reforms. Aldo Leopold and Lynn White, Jr., have been effective advocates along these lines.

A Grass-Roots Trend

In his *American Scholar* essay (Spring), noted in Lookout for August, René Dubos wrote of the great change in attitude that has taken place during the past generation. Contrasting the confident reliance on unlimited expansion of technology declared at the 1933 World Fair (in Chicago) with present recognition of the dangers in undisciplined industrial growth, Dr. Dubos referred to the shelving of the SST and the manifest delays in the development of nuclear power technologies as signs of the new spirit. He remarked that in the present, constructive trends are "more influenced by grass-roots movements than by official directives." A particularly impressive example of such influence is the

work of the New Alchemy Institute, a group of young scientists who have established an experimental farm and research center at Woods Hole, Mass., on Cape Cod.

Reform in Food Production

In the 1976 edition of the *Journal of the New Alchemists,* John Todd, a marine biologist and one of the Institute's founders, describes the perspectives and goals envisioned by this group:

> If modern industrial agriculture were replaced with a diversity of alternatives that included small, biologically-gardened or farmed regions during the normal growing season and terrestrial capsules such as arks for year-round production of foods, then a good deal beyond agriculture would be affected.
>
> Such a transformation would benefit society in many ways. The replacement of fossil fuel agriculture might alleviate some of the impact of the seemingly inevitable economic crash or famine. It would encourage agriculture to be less corporate, and to re-establish it as a local and regional pursuit, involving, as it eventually must, a much larger proportion of society. Such a decentralization of agriculture would shift food production back to the basic units of society, permitting it to become an urban as well as a rural pursuit. This decentralization might in turn lead to a repopulation of the countryside and perhaps even to the rebirth of a diversity of cultures and customs which are bioregional in their content.

Philosophic Themes

Mr. Todd looks to a day when the feeding of large populations will not be so dependent on "big machinery," but will involve more work by hand on a smaller scale, using "compact engines powered from wind or solar sources." He gathers various themes of interdependence as developed by present-day ecological researchers, suggesting that this work has a clear relationship to "the ancient concept of the earth as a single living organism." Such ideas seem indicative of the philosophic background of the New Alchemy enterprise. Mr. Todd writes:

> The Greeks had a name which suits the concept, Gaia, meaning earth goddess. It is at the root of the Hopi mythology. The belief in Gaia has been a deep-felt part of many traditional cultures. It resurfaced in the Renaissance with the translation of the Corpus Hermeticum as well as in other writings. Marsilio Ficino, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and Giordano Bruno, who was burned at the stake during the Inquisition, spoke of the planet as an entity having an awareness of itself and its place in the cosmos.

Reverence for Nature

From a review of history Mr. Todd shows that the nations and empires which develop vast exploitive economies become subject to rapid decay. "I do not think it likely," he says, "that powerful nations can transcend land abuse indefinitely." The waste and destructiveness of imperialistic societies are contrasted with the reverence for the earth of peoples who honor traditions of conservation and live at a moderate pace:

> Steady-state cultures, which usually are organized regionally and in smaller units, are not as destructive of nature as are states. By the conscious extension of their own existence into that of nature they may have, in fact, the opposite effect, acting as sustainers of regions and protectors of lands that in turn sustain them. Many of these peoples have found means of controlling births without the practice of infanticide and through a variety of methods have attuned their numbers to the carrying capacity of their lands.

"To Mend Lands and Peoples"

The restoration of this attitude toward the land is a natural goal of the New Alchemists. "When people see nature as sacred it is more difficult to understand the value in amassing power, wealth and armies." Mr. Todd writes of his dream:

> A visionary landscape is possible. On theoretical grounds I would argue that we could generate new agricultures which would be mirror images of nature and that these agricultures would not be cancerous but legacies from the living world. It is in the restoration of nature that we will decode the truly creative forces for the future. One of the major intellectual and actual missions of New Alchemy is the search for ways to replace the engines and the hardware of twentieth-century technology with knowledge from nature which when linked to a gentler and appropriate technology can sustain human communities. We are interested in re-integrating existing knowledge to create new wholes which on a smaller scale will begin to mend both lands and peoples. It is just possible that through such activities a transformation of place and consciousness may ensue and that there may be a rebirth of all that is good on the mantle of the earth.

Sacred Linkages

After a quotation from Hermes Trismegistus, Mr. Todd suggests that everyone is able to make a beginning in the right direction, helping to generate the attitude and the spirit which,

sooner or later, must come to pervade a reformed and regenerated world:

> Humble things like planting trees in vacant lots become as important as anything. A little garden in a box on an apartment ledge becomes an affirmation of the emerging power, a symbolic and actual measure of change. It may yet come about that the joy and creativity of the human experience, expressed until now through art and music and loving, will yet have their moment in the sun. It is no coincidence that our health and that of the planet are one. We are a part of it in a way we only dimly comprehend. The question is far more subtle than just pollution and destruction. There is a continuum of being in a hillside brook which extends outward to encompass the world while reaching inward into ourselves. We are a mirror image, a tiny reflection of the earth itself and our collective psyche is a superimposition of images of humanity's experience on earth over time. The same forces which have shaped us have shaped the world. There can be no real separation. . . . We look out at the world, and yet are of it. It is no accident that our attempt to affirm these mysterious linkages involves touching upon that which is considered holy and sacred.

Strengthening Current

This is an outlook which lends itself to endless variations in individual expression. What is now "undercurrent" may before long exhibit the strength and carrying power of a great tide of fresh inspiration, sometimes, as in the case of John Todd, having clear connection with ancient philosophical ideas, but also embodying chiefly a common-sense response to the requirements of social transition now affecting all the world. The warnings of the ecologists, the urgings of the environmentalists, the obvious pertinence of the counsels of E. F. Schumacher in *Small Is Beautiful* have all combined to generate recognition of certain practical necessities. For some years now there have been intimations of changing opinion among the leaders in that lagging but powerful institution, American business and industry. We can now point to a decisive expression of this sort by a well known American banker.

Restraint for Industry

In the *Saturday Review* for July 10, Louis Lundborg, a former Bank of America chairman of the board, calls attention to the general reorientation that American industry and business must undergo in the almost immediate future, even though actual

change may be gradual. Among the key ingredients, he says, will be restrained industrial growth, rejection of our "throw away" policy, using more durable products for a longer time, and becoming experts at repairing the things useful to us. Mr. Lundborg says:

> There are signs on the horizon that the American buying public may be ready for some of these changes. A recent survey by the Louis Harris Organization showed that the American public may be turning its back on a life-style that is based so heavily on material consumption. An overwhelming majority reported a lack of interest in having new annual models of cars and appliances, in changing clothing fashions every year, in discarding clothes before they wear out.
>
> There was a positive expression of more interest in quality than in quantity, a desire to have things made better and made to last longer; but there was an equally vocal deploring of the wastefulness of our consumption.
>
> These were not spokesmen of any conservation or ecology group testifying; this was a cross-section sampling of the American public.

"Waste" Must Stop

The attitude of this writer, a businessman and banker, is in itself most encouraging. He speaks critically of the pattern of furious consumption which prevailed in America after World War II, caused in part by intensive sales promotion and the manipulation of consumer demand. This became, he says, "a tremendously wasteful pattern— a fact that was not overlooked by those concerned with protecting the environment." He calls for a "reshaping of values" and "getting away from myths," which will open the way to "recognizing that we must move toward a more restrained pattern of industrial growth." What Mr. Lundborg means by "myths" is made clear in the opening paragraphs of his article:

> Most of my adult life I have seen and heard businessmen go into a state of apoplexy over any trend or movement that they considered a threat to what they have called the American Way of Life or the American Free Enterprise System.

New Directions

> For example, I have always been quite sure that the basic reason for the violent reaction of conservative businessmen against the long hair and sloppy dress of the hippies a few years ago was that, consciously or unconsciously, they considered the hippies a threat to the production-consumption syndrome of our market economy.

The directions in which growth may be constructive are briefly indicated by Mr. Lundborg:

> The slowing rate of industrial growth will flatten, even shrink, the number of jobs in industry. This will call for further acceleration of the shift to the service industries. There will be the growing need for repair and maintenance . . . but there is a host of other needs waiting to be filled, and most of them are what we call labor-intensive. The replanting and rehabilitation of our abused forests, the restoration of our soil, the recycling of materials, the reclaiming of polluted water bodies—these are only a few examples.

Country and City

The reference to replanting our "abused forests" recalls a passage in E. F. Schumacher's foreword to the new book, *Forest Farming,* in which this Gandhian economist speaks of the vast transformation that might be worked in India if every able-bodied person, following the injunction of the Buddha, would plant and maintain one tree a year for five years running. This plan, he said, "would produce foodstuffs, fibres, building material, shade, water, almost anything that man really needs." He added:

> By means of trees wildlife could be conserved, pollution decreased, and the beauty of many landscapes enhanced. This is the way, or at least one of the ways, to spiritual, moral, and cultural regeneration.

Changes of this sort represent golden opportunities where people still have freedom to act. Unfortunately, there are other present-day problems in which change is likely to prove much more difficult. The congested, polluted, and very nearly bankrupt cities of the nation—New York, economists warn, is only the first to be in serious trouble—are the most obvious example. A long chain of causes is responsible for making modern cities the ugly, unhealthy places, filled with anguish, poverty and rebellion, that they are today. No one, it seems fair to say, knows what to do about the problem of cities, although there is at least some progress in understanding its origin and scope.

A Scholar on "Occultism"

The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance (University of California Press, 1972), by Wayne Shumaker, may be of mild interest to students by reason of the limited open-mindedness the author displays. As he says in his Preface, he is not a "believer." His

reason for giving extended accounts of the practice of astrology and alchemy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, of the belief in witchcraft and "white magic," and of the enormous influence of Hermetic teachings, he explains, is that these are all subjects now undergoing revival in the present. He has a graduate student in Renaissance Latin who casts horoscopes, and after a lecture a brief comment on "Hermetic mysticism brought a rush of students to the podium." The author is not persuaded that "former ages possessed bodies of esoteric wisdom which far exceeded ours," and he thinks that the four elements of the ancients represent a quite backward view of the constitution of the world. Mr. Shumaker maintains that his disbelief has not got in the way of comprehension of these various branches of "occultism," and he occasionally displays some sympathy for the ideas he describes—"I can perceive," he says, "rather alluring values in the very delusions I reject." In relation to the idea of magic he remarks, "A considerable part of the present unrest derives from the disappearance of cosmic meanings which the magician took for granted."

Hermetism "Least Harmful"

One may doubt, however, that this book will throw even a little light on Renaissance occultism for anyone seriously interested in the subject. However careful its scholarship, a work which does not even mention H. P. Blavatsky cannot be expected to contain much more than the obscurity with which genuine occult writers protected themselves from the fires of the Inquisition, and not always successfully. The temperate condescension of this author is illustrated by a closing passage, giving his evaluation of the teachings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus:

> Hermetic theology is now likely to appear "true" only to persons who combine an abnormal responsiveness to moral elevation with the lack of a disciplined historical and philosophical sense. Nonetheless I urge again that theological Hermetism was in all probability the least harmful of the occult systems examined in these pages. Because its emphasis was meditative, Hermetism absorbed little or no wealth, made no false predictions about daily activities, provoked no persecutions, and did not encourage malice. If conversion to its doctrines sometimes produced delusions of superior wisdom, and perhaps, less often, an arrogance not uncommon among a band of *illuminati,* it is unlikely to have caused much overt suffering. On the contrary: like contemplative Buddhism, it had a cer-

tain nobility, and its pietism may have enriched a few lives which otherwise would have been emotionally poor.

Occultism Remains Occult

A passage from the Introductory of *The Secret Doctrine* (xl) gives comprehensive explanation of why even a conscientious scholar, relying on the sources available to him, should reach these shallow conclusions. After the downfall of the mysteries, H.P.B. says—

> began the disappearance and final and systematic elimination from the memory of men of the real nature of initiation and the Sacred Science. From that time its teaching became Occult, and Magic sailed but too often under the venerable but misleading name of Hermetic philosophy. As real Occultism had been prevalent among the Mystics during the centuries that preceded our era, so Magic, or rather Sorcery, with its Occult Arts, followed the beginning of Christianity.

These are some of the reasons why even the philosophy of Occultism must remain a sealed mystery to anyone who hopes to learn its secrets from a study of the documents of European history, yet gives no attention to the writer who has supplied the only available key.

A Doctor's View of Death

It is in keeping with the times that a well known psychiatrist, Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, now says openly that she is convinced, as a result of many experiences with terminal illness, that "death really does not exist." In *McCall's* for August, Kenneth Woodward reports conversations with Dr. Kübler-Ross, who practices in the Chicago area. She told him that she began thinking along these lines while caring for aged patients in Switzerland twenty-five years ago. At last confronted by death, they "died with expressions of great happiness on their faces." These patients, she knew, were neither psychotic nor drugged. In time she encountered some cases in which an apparently dying individual later recovered and reported what seemed to be an out-of-the-body experience. One such person, a woman brought to a hospital critically ill, related that when a nurse saw that she was dying and left the room to get help, she "felt herself float out of her body." Then, when the doctors came, she observed them trying to resuscitate her and was able to recall their efforts in detail. Although they pronounced her dead, three hours later "she re-

turned to her body and recovered" with no brain damage, and lived eighteen months longer.

Preparation for a "Good Death"

Dr. Kübler-Ross found such reports from patients so persuasive, she refused to agree with other doctors that they were "hallucinating." Such familiar psychiatric jargon did not seem appropriate to her. In this case she "took the view," she said, "that we ought to forget our labels and keep an open mind about her experience." Asked whether there might be a more "scientific" explanation than the reports of patients, she said: "I know of no other way to explain how people who have lost all consciousness and show no vital signs can report exactly what is going on around them." If other scientists, or physicians, she said, "can explain these cases in different terms, then it is up to them to come forward." She named other doctors who are similarly impressed by the testimony of patients who have come very near to death but have not died. One physician is quoted as saying that he has arrived at an "open position" on the question of the existence of the soul. Dr. Kübler-Ross told her interviewer that in her opinion the best preparation for a "good death" is "a life lived in the knowledge that what we do literally lives on after us." Her convictions about a life after death have no particular theological ground, growing rather out of moral concern and the realities of her medical experience. (An earlier report of Dr. Kübler-Ross's views appeared in Lookout in THEOSOPHY for December, 1975.)

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